

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated November 20, 2006, claims 1-3, 14, 16, 17 and 19-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hayashi. Applicant amends base claims 1 and 21 to more particularly point out and distinguish applicant's invention from Hayashi. Specifically, claims 1 and 21 are amended to require that the resin layer and hardening agent layer consist essentially of thermosetting resin and hardening agent, respectively. The use of this language, instead of "comprising", points out that the resin layer does not have additional components including hardeners and hardening promoters and that the hardening agent layer does not have additional components including resins.

Applicant agrees with the Examiner that Hayashi teaches preregs in which the resin has additional components including hardeners and hardening promoters. The present amendments changing the claim language from "comprising" to "consisting essentially of" is intended to provide a clear distinction between Hayashi and applicants invention wherein the hardening agent and thermosetting resin are separated from each other by the fibrous reinforcement.

Claims 1-3, 7-12, 14-17, 19-20 and 23 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Urech. Applicant agrees with the Examiner that Urech, like Hayashi, teaches the use of layers that include mixed resin/hardener. Applicant also agrees that the open claim language (i.e. "comprising") allows applicants invention to be read on Urech. Accordingly, the claims have been amended, as set forth above, to use "consisting of" language to close the claim language and to more particularly point out applicant's invention wherein the resin and hardening agent are not mixed, but rather are separated from each other prior to curing of the prepreg.

The claims were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hayashi or Urech in view of a number of secondary references including Hori, Toshiharu, Zweben and Bales. All of these rejections utilize Hayashi or Urech as the

primary reference upon which the rejection is based. Applicant submits that the amendments to the present invention, as discussed above in connection with the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(b), provides a clear distinction between the primary references and the present invention that is sufficient to also render the claims, as now amended, patentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(b). Accordingly, applicant will not provide any additional arguments with respect to the secondary references, since their relevancy is moot in view of the distinctions set forth above between the amended claims and the two primary references.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, applicant respectfully requests that this application be reexamined and that the claims, as now amended, be allowed.

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Respectfully submitted,

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